

Stein Bids \$188,800
On Project at VAAP
 7-9-7-67

Stein Construction Co. submitted a bid of \$188,800 to the Army Engineers on Wednesday for a pollution abatement project at the Volunteer Army Ammunition Plant here.

However, the bid by the Chattanooga firm exceeds by more than 15 per cent the government estimate of \$144,740. Such bids usually are rejected as excessive.

H.E. Collins Contracting Co., also of Chattanooga, submitted the only other bid, a \$500,000 offer.

The project is for installation of a mist eliminator system at Tower No. 2 to reduce aerial pollution in the east acid area.

'Cloudy' Issue . . .

Tyner Area Residents Find Themselves 'in the Middle'

VFP10-15-67 By BOB POE

Hundreds of residents of the Tyner area near the giant Volunteer Army Ammunition Plant are really caught between the devil and the deep blue haze.

The smoke, odor, suspended particulate matter, noise and especially the fog continues to cloud the air in the community, but the material being produced by VAAP is vital to the war effort in Vietnam and most residents say they are willing to put up with what has been described as only a "temporary inconvenience."

Nevertheless, they are still faced with the day-to-day war of their own, combating the acid and ammonia fumes and gritty particles which drift through the air.

According to testimony in chancery court Thursday from Glen E. Rucker, general manager of the Farmers Chemical Corp. which is operating on a portion of the VAAP property, the fumes and smell is caused from four nitric and sulfuric acid towers being operated by Farmers Chemical for the VAAP.

Rucker was testifying in behalf of the defendant. Farmers Chemical, which is the subject of an injunction requested by residents of the area who feel the chemical plant is to blame for their misery.

UNDER ADVISEMENT

The suit, presently under advisement by Chancellor Ray L. Brock, requests the plant be issued an injunction ordering a halt in operations until more substantial air pollution control methods are taken.

The 19-year veteran chemist said that if the four old towers which were also used during World War II were shut down, the ammunition works would be without vital base material to manufacture explosives for use by the Army in Vietnam.

An estimated \$4 million has been spent by Farmers Chemical for plants to limit the flow of harmful fumes, etc., into the area. Rucker testified that a

new nitric acid plant, a cooling tower, several new boilers and a scrubber have been installed.

He pointed out that when the plant first began operation in January of 1963, much of the heating units in the necessary process were fired by coal. As of last spring the chemical plant converted its furnaces to gas and oil-fired units.

The Farmers Chemical Corp. is owned by hundreds of farmers throughout the southeast and in addition to producing the acids for Volunteer Army Ammunition Plant use, it turns out 1,000 tons of fertilizer per day. This totals to about \$20 million in sales per year and a payroll for 300 employees of close to \$2 million per year, according to Mr. Rucker.

He added that since 1963 \$18 million has been spent to upgrade all aspects of the process, which Rucker said were not responsible for the "whisky and tobacco-colored" fumes and the ammonia and acid odor in the area.

FERTILIZER

The federal government has intervened on the side of Farmers Chemical saying the injunction would hamper the production of TNT for war purposes.

However, the Army engineers in Mobile, Ala., announced Friday they would open bids on pollution abatement projects for the plant Nov. 9. They said the project will include devices to remove solid particles and odor from the emissions of the plant.

Perhaps out of all the "feuding" there is a somewhat humorous note. The fertilizer being produced is floating over the area, and when mixed with rain, enriches the ground near the plant.

So much fertilizer has floated in the area during the past four years that one lady testified in court that she was forced to cut weeds from her garden with a handsaw and a wild onion grew about 30-36 inches high.

"That onion was the wildest I think I ever saw," she said.